In Memoriam: Dr. S. Fred Singer

By Thom Golab — April 9, 2020

Fred Singer was an impressive scientist with a great list of achievements. He will be missed.

It is with great sadness that I note that on April 6, 2020, the American Council on Science and Health lost a longtime member of its Board of Scientific Advisors, Dr. S. Fred Singer. ACSH’s Founder, Dr. Elizabeth Whelan and Dr. Singer were also very good friends. Dr. Singer was a reviewer of ACSH’s 1997 white paper, Global Climate Change and Human Health.

Born in Austria in 1924 to Jewish parents, he was forced to flee to England to escape the Nazis when they invaded. He made his way to America and became a U.S. citizen in 1944.

Dr. Singer earned his B.E.E. in electric engineering at Ohio State University, an A.M. in physics at Princeton, and later his Ph.D. in physics where his thesis committee included J. Robert Oppenheimer and Niels Bohr.

Dr. Singer was prolific as a writer, speaker, academic, even in public service. He wrote, co-wrote, and edited dozens of books. He produced more than 200 technical papers for peer-reviewed journals and major media outlets. His lectures and seminars were at institutions all of the country including: UC Berkeley, California Institute of Technology, SUNY Stony Brook, University of South Florida, UConn, University of Colorado, Imperial College London, Copenhagen University, University of Rome and Tel Aviv University. He also participated in dozens of seminars around the world.
He served a professor at the University of Virginia, University of Miami, and the Institute for Space Science and Technology, and he founded the Scientific and Environmental Policy Project and the Non-governmental Internal Panel on Climate Change. He government service spanned from 1953 to 1989 and included: U.S. Department of Transportation, National Advisory Committee for Oceans and Atmosphere, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Weather Satellite Service, and Center for Atmospheric and Space Physics.

His many achievements include: Fellow at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Geophysical Union, American Physical Society, American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics, and NASA awarded him commendations for important contributions to space research.

His pioneering work at Johns Hopkins University’s Applied Physics Lab led to discovery of the Van Allen Radiation Belt. His calculations with atomic clocks are now used in our GPS systems. He designed satellites and instrumentation to better explore our atmosphere (this work won him a White House commendation).

He, of course, is most noted for his writings and lectures refuting what he called global warming alarmists. After followed his treatment by his opponents was horrific. His side of how best to respond to changes in our climate has suffered a great lost, as has everyone who had the chance to work with him and to know him.